



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

State House, Room 224  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903  
401-222-2080

Lincoln D. Chafee  
Governor

May 22, 2012

TO THE HONORABLE, THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE:

I am transmitting to the Secretary of State, with my signature, 2012 – S 2555, Substitute A, As Amended, “An Act Relating to Food and Drugs – The Edward O. Hawkins and Thomas C. Slater Medical Marijuana Act.”

R.I. Gen. Laws §21-28.6-12, titled “Compassion Centers,” was enacted in 2009 to allow medical marijuana patients who did not have safe access to medical marijuana to obtain medical marijuana from state-regulated medical marijuana compassion centers. However, the legislation did not restrict the number of patients a compassion center was permitted to serve, and each compassion center had the potential to become a large scale, multi-million dollar business.

I believe that patients with debilitating medical conditions such as cancer, glaucoma and AIDS should have safe, reliable and well-regulated access to medical marijuana available for therapeutic purposes. Last year I pledged to work with advocates, patients and members of the General Assembly to improve the 2009 legislation. Among other things, this bill imposes strict statutory limitations on the amount of marijuana each state-regulated compassion center may possess and requires compassion center officers, board members, agents, volunteers and employees to undergo a criminal background check with fingerprints. State-regulated compassion centers will continue to be limited in number and will be significantly smaller in size, scope and scale.

For the foregoing reasons, I sign this bill into law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. D. Chafee".

Lincoln Chafee